extension fee is enclosed. Please charge any additional fee required for the extension, and credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account 06-1205.

In response to the Office Action, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE TITLE:

Please rewrite the title to read --Expression Tree Optimization For Processing Obscured Graphical Objects--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 8, 17 and 24 as follows:

1. (AMENDED) A method for optimising an expression tree, said expression tree for compositing an image and comprising at least [two] three nodes, each said node of said tree being either a graphical element or a graphical operator and having a region of the image represented by said node, the method comprising, for at least one node in said tree, the steps of:

comparing the region represented by said node to a region representation data structure corresponding to one or more regions represented by [at least one] any other node in said expression tree;



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determining if the region represented by said node is totally or partially obscured by said one or more regions; and

modifying the expression tree in the event that the region represented by said node is at least partially or totally obscured.

8. (AMENDED) A method of optimising an expression tree for compositing an image, said expression tree comprising a plurality of nodes each said node being either a graphical element or a graphical operator and having a region of the image represented by said node, said method comprising the steps of:

traversing the expression tree node by node;

determining at a current node if a region of the image represented at said current node is obscured by regions represented by [at least one] any other node in said expression tree, and modifying said expression tree in the event that the current node is partially or totally obscured.

17. (AMENDED) An apparatus for optimising an expression tree, said expression tree for compositing an

image and comprising at least [two] three nodes, each said node of said tree being either a graphical element or a graphical operator and having a region of the image represented by said node, the apparatus comprising:

means for comparing the region represented by said node to a region representation data structure corresponding to one or more regions represented by [at least one] any other node in said expression tree;

means for determining if the region represented by said node is totally or partially obscured by said one or more regions; and

means for modifying the expression tree in the event that the region represented by said node is at least partially or totally obscured.

24. (AMENDED) An apparatus for optimising an expression tree for compositing an image, said expression tree comprising a plurality of nodes each said node being either a graphical element or a graphical operator and having a region of the image represented by said node, said apparatus comprising:

means for traversing the expression tree node $\label{eq:posterior} \text{by}_{\underline{\ }} \text{node};$

